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Summary record of the 14th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 27 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
*Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Saha

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05-57355 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*) (A/60/6 (Introduction), A/60/6 (Sect. 1-27), A/60/6 (Sect. 28A-G), A/60/6 (Sect. 29-35), A/60/6 (Income sect. 1-3))

General discussion (continued)

1. **Ms. Patterson** (United States of America) said that at the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, the world's leaders had acknowledged the need for the United Nations to review the mandates originating from General Assembly resolutions in order to identify ways of avoiding duplication and reducing waste. It was critical that the Organization move forward quickly with that process and that the programme budget for the biennium 2006-07 include the costs of the important management reforms approved in the Summit Outcome.
2. The United States believed that the concept of a "unitary United Nations" provided a useful analytical framework for making the difficult decisions on how best to give coherence and rationality to the United Nations system, as well as a basis upon which to deal with the system on budgetary and policy grounds. The concept was also useful because it was important to see how all functions and programmes in the system related to each other and, more importantly, to the Organization's core functions.
3. Over the years the Organization had assumed a Byzantine complexity as activities, committees and institutional entities had proliferated. Duplication, overlap and inefficiencies had too often been the expensive result of a lack of coordination in programme planning and implementation. The United States was fully aware that many of the Organization's substantive interests were best served by pluralism. However, there was a clear need for a central coordinating mechanism to serve as an informational and policy clearing house aimed primarily at ensuring consistency.
4. In implementing the "unitary United Nations" concept, Member States would need to be far more assertive in guiding and setting the policy agenda of agencies. Too often, coordination difficulties and agencies' ineffectiveness were directly attributable to

Member States' willingness to allow agencies free rein. That culture must be changed. Governments, especially major contributors, must exercise their collective voice in providing policy direction to the agencies. In that regard, the United States proposed that a consultative mechanism should be established in New York to bring relevant parties together. Such a mechanism would greatly facilitate the mandate-review process agreed to in the Summit Outcome.

5. If the mandate review and other reforms were not implemented, the United States would find it very difficult to reach agreement on the budget proposal before the Committee. By applying the "unitary United Nations" concept, the United States had already identified a number of specific instances of duplication or of areas in which efficiency could be improved by rationalizing certain agencies and functions.
6. While the United States welcomed the consolidation of the United Nations Information Centres in Europe, the streamlining process must continue elsewhere. Since United Nations Headquarters was located in New York City, the Committee should consider whether continued spending on Centres in North America was justified. The activities of the Centres should also be consolidated in other regions, to the maximum extent possible, and the Organization should fully exploit technological advances that would make public information functions more efficient and effective.
7. The number of scheduled meetings should be reduced initially by at least 5 per cent. Meetings should start and end on time and there should be a realistic assessment of the frequency and duration of the meetings needed to accomplish goals. Intersessional meetings of main or subordinate bodies should be funded through voluntary contributions, or not held at all. The marginally useful Committee on Conferences should be eliminated, and the Secretariat must exploit technological advances to reduce the number and cost of meetings.
8. For reasons that remained unclear, the Secretary-General had not fully used the authority given to him in 2003 to redeploy up to 50 posts from lower to higher priority areas. Since the Secretary-General should have the same authority as the chief executive officer of any large organization, the United States proposed to give him the broad authority to redeploy posts and resources in the 2006-2007 budget. There should also be greater

reliance on outsourcing to the private sector for resources such as translation or photocopying. With respect to the proposal to lift the freeze on the hiring of General Service staff, the United States believed that the freeze should be extended, and not lifted until critical reforms were actually in place. More broadly, the Secretariat should quantify the savings made when proposing outputs for deletion.

9. The practice of giving certain expert members of United Nations bodies an additional subsistence allowance should be discontinued, and the General Assembly should consider using videoconferencing and other communication technologies to the maximum extent possible. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) should be phased out, because its donors had lost confidence in its ability to provide relevant services in an economical manner. The General Assembly should also work to rationalize the use of consultants, ensuring that they were not used as a replacement or substitute for posts, and should consider consolidating the multiple United Nations liaison offices in North America and Europe.

10. The Organization's information and communication technologies (ICT) should be thoroughly reviewed. Organizations, departments and offices should not be purchasing separate systems that were incompatible with each other, and the strategy should allow for greater productivity and easier communication. Rationalization of ICT could also help achieve rigorous scrutiny of United Nations publications and how they were distributed, as called for by the Advisory Committee.

11. She noted that the budget proposal included a request for \$42.8 million to fund the regular programme of technical cooperation, which appeared to duplicate projects carried out by United Nations entities and should be phased out. With respect to the Secretary-General's proposal to create a reserve fund to deal with additional expenditures arising from currency fluctuations and inflation, the United States believed that it would be better to wait until the dollar strengthened before considering such a mechanism. The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) should both be funded exclusively on a voluntary basis. In the case of UNEP, her delegation would seek greater clarification on the proposal for 13 new posts.

12. Although her delegation supported the objective of promoting the decolonization process in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, it believed that it ultimately lay within the authority of the administering Power to determine when its obligations under Article 73 *e* of the Charter ceased. The United States would welcome real progress on the delisting of the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories and opposed attempts to link the work of the specialized agencies and other organizations to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Decisions on missions should be taken on a case-by-case basis with the concurrence of the administering Power.

13. Because the convening of groups of governmental experts was threatening to become a substantial and unnecessary drain on the budget of the Department for Disarmament Affairs such groups should be convened only in response to resolutions of the First Committee. Moreover, the United States opposed the troubling practice by which the sponsors of resolutions creating a group of governmental experts convened a second group immediately, without issuing a substantive report.

14. The United States strongly supported the efforts to reform management and increase accountability within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), but believed that more work should be done on results-based budgeting. However, UNODC had made robust efforts to reduce the number of meetings and reports in accordance with rule 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME), and the resulting increase in voluntary contributions demonstrated the importance attached by the international community to multilateral cooperation to combat terrorism, illicit drugs, organized crime and corruption.

15. Her delegation welcomed the efforts of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to build a culture of effective management and accountability and establish global strategic objectives, measures and indicators, but urged UNHCR to pay even greater attention to achieving its objectives. The United States sought the abolition of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Division for Palestinian Rights, because both were inimical to the

aim of ensuring that United Nations funds were directed to its highest priorities and towards achieving a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They were also biased, and did not further the international community's goal of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

16. Although the report of ACABQ (A/60/7) contained some interesting observations, her delegation was disappointed that it had not followed through by making action-oriented recommendations to help guide the Committee in its deliberations on the budget. It was also disappointed that ACABQ had not included information on the total dollar impact of its recommendations, as it had in the past. The United States appreciated the Secretary-General's efforts to eliminate activities that were no longer useful or which duplicated other activities, and encouraged him to continue those efforts. Rather than wait until the next budget to delete additional obsolete outputs, he should propose outputs for deletion throughout the year.

17. By setting priorities, eliminating obsolete activities, promoting efficiencies and finding creative ways to manage resources, the General Assembly could approve a budget that ensured sufficient resources for the Organization's activities and which included substantial and significant reform measures.

18. **Mr. Song Young-wan** (Republic of Korea) said that in its discussion of results-based budgeting, inputs and outputs, accountability and oversight, the Committee should not overburden the United Nations with too many new requirements. In order to achieve its goals of efficiency and effectiveness, the Committee must take a balanced approach.

19. The Secretary-General should exercise his authority under the Charter of the United Nations to manage the Secretariat effectively, and the Republic of Korea looked forward to receiving his recommendations on budgetary, financial and human-resources policies and rules in the first quarter of 2006. It also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to strengthen oversight through the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and through an independent external investigation. Both mechanisms were valuable tools and their results and recommendations should be taken seriously.

20. The figure of 0.1 per cent real budget growth from the biennium 2004/05 to the biennium 2006/07, provided in the proposed programme budget, was

slightly misleading. Since the initial estimate for the biennium 2004/05 had been revised substantially upward, the actual change was closer to 20 per cent. In view of the continued rapid growth in the regular and peacekeeping budgets, it was all the more important to examine how budgetary resources were used and the results achieved with them.

21. In that context, his delegation was pleased to see that results-based budgeting was taking root as a methodology and agreed with ACABQ that the Secretariat should continue to refine it by, for example, adapting the results-based budgeting approach to support and administrative functions and clarifying which outputs contributed to which objectives and accomplishments, and to what extent. It was essential that the process of refinement be both specific and quantifiable.

22. The Republic of Korea welcomed the proposed discontinuation of 3,019 obsolete, ineffective or marginally useful outputs, but noted that some sections of the budget proposal lacked any recommendations for their deletion. It would be useful to know what resources would be made available as a result of discontinuing those outputs. That information should be included in future budget proposals and further reviews should identify still more outputs that could be discontinued without negative effects.

23. Reform was not a one-off event, but an ongoing process. Although the elimination of unnecessary outputs was valuable and would free up budgetary resources for activities of high priority, failure to review outputs on a periodic basis would lead to a renewed accumulation of unnecessary outputs. In that regard, the Republic of Korea also welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to facilitate a review of mandates older than five years, as agreed at the 2005 World Summit.

24. **Mr. Konuzin** (Russian Federation) said that the proposed programme budget should be considered in conjunction with the World Summit Outcome, which had assigned many new tasks to the United Nations, with serious financial implications. The budget proposals were already likely to represent absolute growth of over 5.4 per cent. There were of course objective reasons for the significant increase in United Nations expenditures over recent years, but the scale of the requested resources highlighted the urgent need to increase the Secretariat's efficiency, strengthen budget

discipline, introduce cost-saving measures, and abandon obsolete and ineffective programmes.

25. His delegation had long stressed the need to reduce spending on such items as "consultants", "contractual services" and "travel of staff", but the issue had not yet been effectively addressed. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on reducing such spending and on additional posts in the Secretariat deserved support, and opportunities for further reductions should be sought. The request for increased funding for staff training was unconvincing. His delegation had repeatedly stressed the need for a mechanism to assess the effectiveness of skill-building in the Secretariat, but the criteria for such assessment remained vague.

26. The "maintenance base" concept required serious adjustment. The need to maintain the same level of appropriations should be justified, the priority and effectiveness of programmes reconfirmed, and a thorough analysis made of the actual resource requirements. The existing methodology did not preclude the possibility of "conservation" of non-recurring expenses or adjustments for inflation and currency fluctuations which might distort the comparator base of the expenditures in question.

27. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on staffing and management were quite useful, in particular the ones on the cumbersome recruitment procedures, which adversely affected the level of financing of posts and, what was worse, the effectiveness of programme implementation. At the same time, it was difficult to analyse or control the increasing spending on consultants and temporary assistance. The Advisory Committee's proposals for strengthening the personal accountability of staff members, primarily managers, were extremely important, and the use of such tools as demotion and reassignment was justified.

28. It was not clear why the budget proposals avoided mention of the introduction of the mandatory staff mobility system scheduled for implementation in 2007, since approval of the Secretariat's proposals might result in substantial additional expenditures. Information on the amount of such expenditures would be welcome. His delegation intended to address in the informal consultations the need for further improvement of results-based budgeting and for prioritization and enhanced efficiency in the use of the

Organization's limited resources, as well as for enhanced programme evaluation, the application of strict budget discipline, and increased accountability for the Secretariat's managers.

29. No cost-saving measure should result in a deterioration of the services provided by the Secretariat to Member States or contravene the fundamental principles of the United Nations, such as multilingualism and the central role of the intergovernmental bodies. In view of the need to curb the growth in expenditures and since the main objective of the current reforms was to ensure cost-effective implementation of mandates, the new resource requirements derived from the decisions taken at the World Summit should be financed as far as possible from the reallocation of resources.

30. **Mr. Kapoma** (Zambia) said that development was one of the priority areas of the Organization's work, a fact underlined in the outcome documents of recent international conferences. Indeed, an office had been established to solicit support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), with the aim of stimulating rapid development through the use of Africa's own resources supplemented by its development partners. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) had an important role to play in that undertaking.

31. The increasing use of extrabudgetary resources was worrying because it might result in a budget which did not reflect the development agenda of the developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. Activities approved by the General Assembly should be funded in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter and no conditions should be attached to the use of extrabudgetary resources.

32. The year-long time lag in filling vacant posts impaired the Organization's performance. As the Advisory Committee stated in paragraph 64 of its report, programme managers must begin the recruitment process well in advance of planned retirements, so that vacant posts could be filled within 30 days. The post of Special Adviser for Africa, which had been vacant for four months, must be filled as a matter of urgency, since the Office of the Special Adviser had an important role to play in securing support for NEPAD.

33. Another aspect of the recruitment problem was the imbalance in the composition of the Secretariat.

Zambia, for example, was still underrepresented even though qualified nationals had applied for posts. Article 103, paragraph 3, of the Charter must be implemented. His delegation supported the recommendation of ACABQ that nationals should be recruited to the regional economic commissions, the United Nations Office at Nairobi and the United Nations information centres.

34. Consultants should be used only when in-house expertise was not available and in accordance with section VIII of General Assembly resolution 53/221. Such consultants as were needed should be recruited on as wide a geographical basis as possible.

35. It was a matter for concern that the level of appropriation for the Development Account had remained static and that the savings that were expected to be channelled into the Account had not materialized. His delegation would like to know why no additional funds had been allocated to the Account and called for a review of the funding mechanism.

36. With regard to results-based budgeting, some of the performance indicators were not specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). The Organization must perfect the art of results-based budgeting as quickly as possible.

37. Although the revival and development of Africa was that continent's own primary responsibility, it needed the assistance of the international community to carry its development agenda forward. Zambia therefore called for increased resources for the relevant activities and hoped that its cooperation partners would not be found wanting.

38. **Mr. Zongo** (Burkina Faso) said that at the World Summit the Heads of State and Government had reaffirmed their commitment to measures to rid the world of poverty. They had thus underlined their intention to strengthen the United Nations and to take up the challenges of hunger, poverty and the promotion of education and justice. Sufficient resources must therefore be allocated to the reform process in order to improve the effectiveness of the Organization's work and his delegation noted with satisfaction that the proposed programme budget addressed certain elements of the reform. While welcome, however, reform must not divert attention from the development issues that continued to preoccupy the whole of Africa.

39. The proposed increase over the budget of the biennium 2004-05 amounted to less than 0.1 per cent. Three points should be borne in mind in the light of that austerity. Firstly, NEPAD had still not brought about a revival in Africa, whose development partners must therefore reinforce their commitment. Secondly, the situation of ECA was worrying and the Commission must be given sufficient financial resources to attain its objectives. Thirdly, a much larger appropriation should have been proposed for the Development Account.

40. As a landlocked country, Burkina Faso believed that the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action would make a contribution to the development efforts of landlocked and transit developing countries. To that end, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should be given adequate support.

41. The United Nations should adapt itself to the new social and political realities and seek to discharge its commitments and thereby offer hope to the weakest and poorest.

42. **Ms. Asmady** (Indonesia) said that it was incumbent on Member States to give practical expression to the statement of intent contained in the World Summit Outcome. Indonesia was determined that all mandated activities should be implemented. Critical current challenges needed urgent action in the shape of international and regional cooperation for development, for which adequate resources must be provided. It was important to focus attention on the allocation of the resources requested in the proposed programme budget in accordance with established priorities, with particular emphasis on urgent development activities.

43. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs should therefore be strengthened so that it could provide greater support to the Economic and Social Council. For their part, the regional economic commissions were an important means of promoting regional cooperation and the increased allocation proposed for them was therefore welcome. Humanitarian assistance, particularly in the wake of natural disasters, was another area that required serious attention and additional resources and her delegation noted with satisfaction the proposed increase in such assistance.

44. The increasing use of extrabudgetary resources for core activities must be carefully monitored because of its potential to paralyse development work. It would be far better to fund such activities from the regular budget, which would or course require the payment of assessed contributions in full and on time.

45. **Mr. Tal** (Jordan) said that the Organization must rise to the challenge of an era in which its responsibilities and programmes had expanded, expectations had increased and criticism had intensified. Recent events at Headquarters and in the field had fuelled attacks which had led critics to question the Organization's role. The Fifth Committee was examining the proposed programme budget against that background and must promote reform to improve the ability of the United Nations to fulfil its responsibilities and mandates.

46. While the highest standards of efficiency must apply to the use of available resources, the General Assembly must not shy away from acknowledging that expanded responsibilities led to a commensurate increase in funding. As the main deliberative, democratic body of the Organization, the Assembly played a central role in setting policy, appropriating resources and exercising oversight. His delegation believed in a partnership between the Member States and the Secretariat, but experience had shown many deficiencies in various areas of management. Member States must not confine their role to policy-setting, but must be fully engaged in all areas of management and budgeting.

47. While the discipline exercised in preparing the budget estimates was positive, his delegation would have liked to see a more equitable distribution of the modest increase in resources among budget sections, including sustainable economic development and economic cooperation, which were vitally important to developing countries and had been a focus of the 2005 World Summit Outcome. Extrabudgetary resources, an important supplement to regular budget allocations, should be scrutinized as carefully as the regular budget. His delegation was surprised to see that they accounted for 62 per cent of total budget allocations, with a portion being spent on areas that clearly deserved a more stable, continuous and sustainable source of funding, namely, legislative mandates and substantive activities. Increased reliance on extrabudgetary resources for mandated substantive, operational or support activities was not in the interests

of the Organization and brought into question the "zero-growth" premise of the proposed programme budget. Despite the emphasis on improving the Organization's efficiency and effectiveness, and despite the human resources management reforms under way, the resources allocated to training seemed insufficient. Acquiring skills and multidisciplinary qualifications should be part of career development.

48. His delegation recognized that the Organization must become lean, agile and able to respond swiftly to challenges and it noted the proposal of the Secretary-General to discontinue over 3000 outputs in accordance with regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the PPBME Regulations and Rules. It nevertheless wondered how those outputs had been selected, how the exercise would streamline the work of departments and what savings would be made. A thorough, non-selective evaluation must be made of all outputs, particularly those whose mandates had not come to an end.

49. The Advisory Committee must continue to play its pivotal role in helping the General Assembly, as provided for in rule 157 of the Assembly's rules of procedure. The integrity of its expert opinions and recommendations depended on the neutrality, independence and impartiality of its members. Among the matters to be addressed in that regard were perceived conflicts of interest, the qualifications of its members and, most importantly, the inequalities in their conditions of service.

50. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Qatar) said that the proposed programme budget for the forthcoming biennium was particularly important not only because it coincided with the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations but also on account of the criticisms that had recently been made of the Organization and its financial management, and the doubts that had been cast on its credibility. Under the Charter, the General Assembly and its related bodies had a fundamental role to play in planning the Organization's programme of work and in establishing its budget. It should also have a greater role in determining the financial and human resources of the Organization and in allocating those resources to the various programmes.

51. He welcomed the submission of the proposed programme budget in the results-based format, but the link between inputs and outputs should continue to be highlighted. In all, 3,019 outputs were proposed for

discontinuation, most of them in the economic and social fields. Although that was essential in order to improve programme delivery, caution should be exercised in the discontinuation of activities that might adversely affect the developing countries. His delegation was particularly concerned at the proposed discontinuation of certain outputs on the grounds that they had not been able to attract additional financial resources.

52. The submission of a zero-growth budget was also a matter of concern, particularly at a time when the number of legislative mandates adopted by the General Assembly was increasing, a trend that gave rise to the redistribution of the funds available in the various sections of the budget and to a reduction in allocations to certain activities.

53. With regard to the proposed reforms contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, his delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's related proposals in a detailed and high-quality document that would enable Member States to take appropriate decisions on improving the work of the Secretariat and enhancing the role of the General Assembly.

54. The Advisory Committee was of crucial importance to the work of the Fifth Committee and its members should therefore act as independent experts rather than as representatives of their States. For that reason, his delegation supported the reform of the Advisory Committee.

55. The regional commissions performed an important role in supporting the Organization's development activities and should therefore be adequately funded from regular budget resources.

56. **Mr. Berti Oliva** (Cuba) said that the task before Member States was to agree, in an atmosphere of full sovereign equality, on the level of resources that the Organization should be given to implement all of its mandated activities. That was a test of the commitment of Member States, as it was useless to assert the Organization's importance to solving current problems if, in practice, it was denied the resources to do so. States which advocated conditions such as budget ceilings and zero nominal growth before they would approve reduced budgets which failed to meet the Organization's needs were showing the true extent of their political will.

57. The principle of zero nominal growth in the proposed 2006-2007 programme budget was difficult to reconcile with the new challenges facing the Organization. While resources must be used efficiently, it was hard to understand how new challenges could be met with a regular budget that did not increase. Member States should be concerned by the growing dominance of extrabudgetary resources over the regular budget. Moreover, development issues accounted for a negligible share of the proposal, and no increase was planned either for the regular programme of technical cooperation or for the Development Account, which recent reports indicated had made substantial savings.

58. The General Assembly had adopted no resolution approving the zero nominal growth approach and the Secretariat should therefore present proposals based on the real needs of the Organization and inform the Assembly of the actual total of resources allocated for 2006-2007. That information would be no more than an estimate, as section 29 of the proposed programme budget had been withdrawn for revision and had not yet been presented to the General Assembly.

59. The proposal of the Secretary-General to eliminate 3,000 obsolete or marginally useful outputs on the basis of regulation 5.6 and rule 105.6 of the PPBME Regulations and Rules was a positive one and proved that genuine implementation of the Regulations and Rules was possible and was not an obstacle to the updating of the Organization's methods. As implementation of those Rules and Regulations had been in response to the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 44 of its resolution 58/270, his delegation was disappointed that the Secretariat had not reported on the matter at the Assembly's fifty-ninth session, responding instead in annex III to the introduction to the proposed programme budget and therefore once again disregarding the deadline for the submission of a report. It was also disappointed that most of the outputs proposed for elimination were in the field of economic and social development.

60. The proposed programme budget for 2006-2007 was the first to be considered since the decision of the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/269, that the programme narratives of the programme budget fascicles should be identical to the biennial programme plan. His delegation was concerned at the indication from the Committee for Programme and Coordination that some sections failed to comply with that decision.

and that the Committee had been unable to consider some sections because they had not been published when it was in session. His delegation urged that the resolution in question should be interpreted in a uniform and coherent way, and the Committee for Programme and Coordination should be able to consider all the programme narratives in detail.

61. The Advisory Committee performed valuable work, but the delegation of Cuba was concerned that some of the recommendations and observations in its first report on the proposed programme budget (A/60/7) went beyond its mandate and that it had even criticized the work of the General Assembly, which was unacceptable. The Advisory Committee should adhere to its responsibilities and refrain from making politically oriented recommendations which could jeopardize the outcome of intergovernmental debate.

62. Presentation of the proposed programme budget coincided with proposals for the reform of the Organization. His delegation had noted a much heavier focus on reform in the statement of the Secretary-General to the Fifth Committee on 25 October 2005 (see A/C.5/60/SR.12) rather than on a detailed presentation of the proposed programme budget. While the reform process was certainly relevant, the proposed programme budget pre-dated the 2005 World Summit. The General Assembly must therefore discuss and act on the proposals of the Summit Outcome first and only then move on to the budget implications of its decisions.

63. Cuba would resist any effort to make approval of the budget for the forthcoming biennium conditional on the reform initiatives in the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It would resolutely condemn and reject any attempt to withhold the assessments of the main contributor, exert pressure on delegations, impose conditions connected with a State's level of assessment, exploit scandal whipped up by one State's media or force through proposals made by a national legislature.

64. **Ms. Zobrist Rentenaar** (Switzerland) said that her delegation was concerned that the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007, being considerably higher than the initial appropriations for 2004-2005, would place a strain on Member States, but realized that it reflected new demands on the Organization, including safety and security and special political missions. Moreover, the regular budget represented

less than half of the peacekeeping budget, which was subject to very little intergovernmental scrutiny, and only a fraction of global national defence spending. Despite the general trend towards expansion, the programme budget had grown modestly, with increased sums for priority areas being covered by a reallocation of resources within the approved budget outline. At the end of the day, the budget must provide the resources needed for the Organization to fulfil its mandated activities and achieve its goals.

65. The Advisory Committee's first report on the programme budget (A/60/7) had usefully focused on major management issues of a cross-cutting, structural and thematic nature and provided just the kind of advice which the Member States needed. Her delegation hoped that the Advisory Committee's recommendations would help to bring about a shift away from line-by-line scrutiny of the proposed programme budget towards a more strategic discussion.

66. Her delegation had long advocated a more balanced and predictable funding structure for the sections of the budget dealing with human rights and humanitarian affairs, and was concerned at the large share of operational activities in those fields financed through extrabudgetary funds. Those were core activities of the Organization and should receive adequate funding in the regular budget. The commitment of the 2005 World Summit to double the regular budget of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights within five years was a long-overdue step in the right direction. For the same reason, her delegation supported the increases proposed for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and for UNHCR.

67. Gender policy and the empowerment of women went beyond the issue of gender balance within the Secretariat. Her delegation was pleased to see more comprehensive mainstreaming of gender into the programme budget and programme managers' greater awareness of the gender-related effects of their work on intended beneficiaries. It also welcomed the measures to improve oversight adopted by the 2005 World Summit. Simply approving additional posts for OIOS was not a suitable response and her delegation would await details of the implementation and financial implications of the reform measures and revised estimates for the section of the budget covering OIOS.

68. Her delegation supported the Advisory Committee's conclusions and recommendations on ICT, which was catching up to staff costs as a driver of expenditure in the United Nations. Because the Organization's management structure did not reflect the increasing importance of ICT, the establishment of a new senior post of Chief Information Officer was an important step towards instituting and implementing an ICT strategy focusing on further harmonization of the ICT architecture and processes and preparing the ground for a long-overdue system-wide ICT framework.

69. Like the Advisory Committee, her delegation largely agreed with the overall level of the proposed programme budget. It hoped not to spend time on micromanaging budget issues, but rather to focus on strategic priorities and conclude consideration of the proposed programme budget rapidly, with a short and concise draft resolution on the matter. The Committee had an ambitious agenda: the reform measures stemming from the 2005 World Summit must be implemented promptly, with maximum effect and with adequate resources, and attention must be devoted to the capital master plan.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.



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Summary record of the 15th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 28 October 2005, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)
Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Saha

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (continued) (A/60/6 (Introduction), A/60/6 (Sect. 1-28), A/60/6 (Sect. 28 A-G), A/60/6 (Sect. 29-35), A/60/6 (Income Sect. 1-3))

General discussion (continued)

1. **Mr. Diab** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the proposed programme budget should faithfully reflect the biennial budget plan, the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes of the principal international conferences. Results-based budgeting was still being developed and his delegation considered that, as in previous years when his delegation had been obliged to request a great deal of additional information, adequate details had not been provided in all sections of the proposed programme budget. Results-based budgeting was not an objective in itself but rather a tool for achieving greater accountability in implementing programmes in accordance with clear indicators of output. He wondered whether the proposed programme budget would cover all the legislative mandates in accordance with Article 17 of the Charter. His delegation noted with concern in that connection that extrabudgetary funding was increasing and now constituted 60 per cent of total resources. Recourse to extrabudgetary funding was not a stable means of funding the Organization.

2. The Syrian Arab Republic had always been in favour of allocating the necessary resources to implement legislative mandates effectively and it rejected the principle of zero-growth budgeting, which was not in accordance with the logic of the situation. Priorities and legislative mandates must determine the level of funding, and not the contrary.

3. All the priorities of the Organization had the same degree of importance and all States were members of the Fifth Committee. His delegation was therefore concerned that the statement made by the delegation of the United States of America the previous day implied that a single State wished to impose its own political agenda to the detriment of multilateral relations. The appeal made by the United States for a decrease in the cost and duration of meetings, including those of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and other bodies, was merely an effort to reduce their role and impair their

status in order to promote the hegemony of the Security Council, which was not a democracy. That kind of appeal was not acceptable. It was an instance of double standards. It had diminished the role of the Member States, particularly the small countries and the developing countries, which had sacrificed so much for independence and sovereignty on the basis of the Charter. The proposed programme budget also reflected the programme plan and the budget plan adopted by the General Assembly at its previous session. The proposal not to fund the programme contained in the programme plan would be going back on a decision that had been reached by consensus.

4. The request for the phasing out of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the regular programme of technical cooperation would move to restrict the resources of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other programmes were targeted mainly at the interests of the developed countries, which made up two thirds of the membership of the United Nations. Together with the Syrian Arab Republic would oppose any move that would prejudice those programmes. Moreover, the request by the United States of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Occupied Territories of the United Nations was unjustified and contrary to the Charter of the United Nations.

5. In view of the bias of the United States in favour of Israel and its disregard of the rights of the Palestinian people, it was not surprising that the United States had sought the abolition of the Commission on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Division for Palestinian Affairs. The related programme had been adopted by an overwhelming majority of Members of the United Nations in support of the rights of the Palestinian people whose territory had been occupied, whose people were dispersed and their homes destroyed. The policies undermined the rights of the Palestinian people in order to ensure protection for the continued to occupy Palestinian territories, including the Syrian Golan. The United States was asking the Security Council from taking the necessary measures under the Charter to put an end to the aggression and to implement the relevant resolutions. The statement by the representative of the United States was incompatible with the obligations of the United States under the Charter.

country as a sponsor of the peace process. Although his delegation was not surprised at the one-sided position of the United States it did find it surprising that the related political issues had been raised in the Fifth Committee, which should deal solely with financial matters.

6. The Organization was entitled to be provided by the Member States with the resources it needed to implement its legislative mandates without conditions. The position of the United States, in making its fulfilment of its obligations conditional on the discontinuation of a number of programmes and the reduction of the budget for a number of others, and on the implementation of reforms on which detailed reports by the Secretariat were still awaited, amounted to blackmail. The United States was thereby continuing a practice it had followed since the financial crisis of the United Nations created by that Member State in the early 1990s.

7. The 2005 World Summit Outcome was the basis for the reform of the United Nations, which had in fact started some years previously. The reforms should be aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization in implementing the legislative mandates determined by Member States in a transparent and responsible negotiating process. Reform was a means to an end not an end in itself and must be implemented on the basis of specific and detailed information provided by the Secretary-General. Reform must not be based on a single vision involving the use of blackmail by one State in order to achieve its own objectives.

8. **Mr. Sach** (Controller) thanked Member States for the warm reception they had given to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. He would confine himself to responding to the questions that had been raised on technical matters.

9. Questions had been asked about the growth rate, in particular whether a zero real growth rate provided an adequate level of funding for the priorities of the Organization. He wished to point out that the proposed programme budget had been prepared in accordance with the guidelines laid down in General Assembly resolution 59/278 on the budget outline and that the growth rate or otherwise of the proposals under consideration reflected the decisions taken by the Member States.

10. In connection with the Development Account, the Secretariat had been asked how the proposals had been

put together and about the level of funding and had also been urged to explore innovative ways in which the programme could be adequately funded. The level of resources in the budget for the Development Account was consistent with the budget outline proposals that had been reviewed the previous year and the proposals were fully consistent with General Assembly resolution 59/278. He drew attention to the recent review of the Development Account and of the regular programme of technical cooperation contained in document A/59/397. The report, which was scheduled to be considered at the current session, included a number of important proposals on operating modalities for both programmes. An assessment of funding arrangements for the Development Account was also addressed in paragraphs 108 and 109 of the report.

11. The Secretariat had been asked to explain the level of appropriations sought in connection with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It had been said that the appropriations were at the same level, despite the emphasis in the Summit Outcome on the priority that should be given to African development. The table in paragraph 3 of the introduction to the proposed programme budget (A/60/6) showed the resources allocated to the priorities approved under the budget outline. A growth rate of 1.7 per cent was shown for NEPAD, which was above the 0.1 per cent average growth rate for the budget as a whole. The revised estimates for the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit would also take into account the resources needed to carry out the required actions in that area. He recalled that the estimated overall effect of requirements for additional funding for development and implementation of the internationally agreed goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, fell outside the scope of the programme budget but would amount to some \$50 billion.

12. Responding to concerns that had been expressed that not all budget sections had been submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination for consideration, in particular sections 9, 23, 24 and 27, he recalled that the General Assembly in its resolution 58/269 had established new procedures on a trial basis for the review of the biennial programme plan, the budget outline and the proposed programme budget. The new procedures had been designed to ensure that the Committee for Programme and Coordination, while

not reviewing the Secretary-General's proposed programme budget for any particular biennium, would nevertheless have the opportunity to review those budget fascicles whose programme narratives differed from those approved in the biennial programme plan. In the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007, the only changes to the programme narratives as a result of mandates approved by the General Assembly subsequent to its adoption of the biennial programme plan occurred in the budget fascicles for the newly established Department of Safety and Security. Accordingly, a new programme for safety and security had been prepared and issued in document A/59/806 for review by the Committee for Programme and Coordination. Budget fascicles had been carefully reviewed to ensure that they were consistent with the terms of resolution 58/269, as a result of which corrigenda had been prepared for two budget fascicles, section 28A and section 28E, in order to ensure full consistency between the programme narratives in the fascicles and those in the biennial programme plan that had been adopted. Resolution 58/269 specified that the new procedures would be in place for a trial period with a view to taking a final decision at the sixty-second session of the General Assembly on the format, content and duration of the strategic framework. Should those new procedures be adopted, the regulations governing programme planning would be revised accordingly.

13. In reply to questions as to why such a large proportion of discontinued outputs were from the development areas of the budget and what was the process for discontinuation, he confirmed that over 40 per cent of the outputs programmed for discontinuation fell within the economic and development areas of the budget (parts IV and V). Outputs programmed in those areas tended to be time-bound and were often replaced with new outputs related to the strategies refined and adjusted for each successive biennium. The development areas of the programme budget had benefited from the rationalization and consolidation of outputs and discontinuation was only undertaken after detailed inspection by programme managers in the course of their preparation of programme budget proposals. The outputs proposed for discontinuation therefore reflected the submissions of individual programme managers.

14. A number of delegations had asked about developments in the area of cost accounting. The study

on that issue was under way and on schedule. It was expected to be submitted to the General Assembly at the second part of its resumed sixtieth session.

15. Concern had been expressed about expenditures on travel, based on comments by ACABQ and taking into account the availability of videoconferencing. Travel requirements were always reviewed carefully and the overall reduction of \$14.3 million for staff travel, as shown in table 4 of the introduction (A/60/6 (Introduction)), was due to a technical downward adjustment of \$13.7 million to reflect the provision of resources for special political missions as a lump sum under "Other" and other reductions under both non-recurrent and recurrent adjustments. The Secretary-General was therefore recommending a reduced rather than an increased provision for travel.

16. Concern had been expressed over the amounts budgeted for consultants. The requirements for consultants had been subject to detailed review resulting in an overall reduction of \$22.1 million, which was composed of a technical downward adjustment of \$17.5 million to reflect special political mission travel funds as a lump sum under "Other" as well as a reduction of \$4.5 million throughout the programme budget.

17. In responding to a number of concerns that had been expressed on the level of extrabudgetary funding and its effect on priorities, he cautioned against generalizations in the review of extrabudgetary estimates, which were composed of many different sorts of funding, and pointed out that the projected increase from \$5.4 billion to \$5.6 billion was a nominal movement and represented a smaller upwards adjustment than the overall increase under the regular budget in both absolute and proportional terms. Extrabudgetary resources were difficult to project and too much reliance should not be placed on current estimates which were the best available at the time. He also pointed out that over 75 per cent of estimated extrabudgetary resources were subject to intergovernmental review and that the estimates for extrabudgetary resources included the peacekeeping support account the components of which were subject to review by the Fifth Committee.

18. In response to a question that had been raised, he said that no revised fascicle would be issued for the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), but that the revised estimates for the implementation of the

World Summit Outcome would provide an update of the overall level of resources to be made available to the Office. The total resources available to OIOS would therefore be the sum of what was contained in the fascicle and the revised estimate for the World Summit.

19. In reply to one delegation which had asked about the financial impact of implementing the mandatory mobility policy in 2007, he said that the costs were not expected to be significant. Travel would not be involved in all cases under the mobility policy, the bulk of which involved staff moving within a duty station rather than between duty stations. Provision for travel on transfer as well as on appointment and separation from service was provided within the common staff costs provisions. No separate request was made for mobility of staff and no significant overall effect on the budget was expected. Nevertheless, the Secretariat would monitor the impact on common staff costs as the programme evolved, beginning in 2007.

20. A number of comments had focused on the suspension of recruitment in the General Service category. The Secretariat had already made a recommendation to the Committee on the matter. The freeze had had an effect on the current budget proposals and some members believed that an opportunity had been missed to take into account the effect of changes in technology. The staffing table currently before the Committee showed a reduction in General Service posts, which had released resources for the strengthening of the junior Professional ranks. That change reflected changes in technology.

21. He wished to emphasize the interconnectedness between consideration of the proposed programme budget and the follow-up to the World Summit. Those two items would be inextricably linked during the course of the current session, which was why the Secretary-General, in presenting his budget proposals, had placed particular emphasis on more effective management. The Secretariat fully shared the view that the oil-for-food programme was a special operation and that the conclusions of the investigation should not be used to negatively characterize the staff of the Organization as a whole. Nevertheless, the reputation of the Organization as a whole had clearly suffered tremendous damage in the aftermath of the oil-for-food programme and it was therefore entirely appropriate for the Summit to examine Secretariat and managerial reforms as one of a number of substantive priorities

requiring attention. In that context, the call by the Summit for an evaluation of the United Nations auditing and oversight system and the reiteration of earlier recommendations by the General Assembly for a comprehensive review of governance structures, principles and accountability provided a timely response to both current and longer-term issues. The necessary resources for undertaking those reviews, together with the reviews of regulations and rules and additional measures for strengthening oversight systems would shortly be presented to the Committee. The Secretariat looked forward to careful consideration by the Committee of the budget as a whole and to its support for the provision of the necessary resources to ensure a successful follow-up to the resolution adopted by the Summit in September.

22. **Mr. Saha** (Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions) said that a number of delegations had implied that the Advisory Committee had exceeded its mandate, apparently in reference to the respective roles of the Advisory Committee and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). As the Advisory Committee's broad mandate had not been restricted since 1946, it would be helpful if delegations could inform him of specific instances in which it had exceeded its mandate.

23. Recalling that some delegations had asked why ACABQ had not quantified its recommendations for cost reductions, he said that the recommended reductions did not significantly affect the overall level of the budget, as noted in paragraph 125 of its report (A/60/7). If any of the recommended reductions were to be accepted by the General Assembly, they would be taken into account in the recalculation that was traditionally done by the Secretariat and submitted to the Fifth Committee prior to the adoption of the budget by the Assembly. The main thrust of the Advisory Committee's recommendations was to ensure the most efficient use of resources, and a number of its observations and recommendations could result in savings, which could be set out in a performance report.

24. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that his delegation was currently reviewing the proposed budgets for the Organization's various Palestinian programmes and would submit relevant comments and recommendations in due course, with a view to strengthening those programmes. It also wished to

associate itself with the related statement made at a previous meeting of the Committee by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

25. He had taken the floor in response to statements made by one delegation and by certain Secretariat officials at the Committee's previous meeting (A/C.5/60/SR.14), indicating that those concerned were actively trying to circumvent General Assembly mandates on programmes relating to the question of Palestine. The delegation in question had called for the abolition of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and of the Division for Palestinian Rights. That was an inappropriate action because the Fifth Committee was a technical committee and should not be politicized.

26. The relevant resolutions adopted each year by the General Assembly addressed the various aspects of the question of Palestine in a reasonable, comprehensive and balanced manner, based on the principles of international law and international legitimacy. They also reflected the permanent responsibility of the United Nations to pursue the question of Palestine until it was resolved in all its aspects. Palestine would continue to assert the important role of the Organization and the need for Israel to respect and implement United Nations resolutions. It would also work with its friends and partners to reaffirm the fundamental principles and positions in the relevant resolutions.

27. Mandates that were regularly submitted for adoption by Member States should not be subject to review by the Secretariat, since their mere submission represented a thorough review by the General Assembly, and that was certainly the case with the mandates and programmes relating to the question of Palestine.

28. **Mr. Jonah** (Sierra Leone) said that his delegation did not share the Controller's view that the report of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme should not lead to radical reform of the Secretariat, since the report had revealed serious flaws in the Secretariat, including weaknesses in administration and lack of integrity. The remarks made by some Committee members, to the effect that the report should not be linked to the reform proposals, did not seek to deny the direct link between the findings and Secretariat reform. Rather, they

reflected the fear that certain other delegations were trying to use the findings to introduce administrative and structural reforms that were not in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations.

29. **Ms. Lock** (South Africa), supported by Algeria and Yemen, said that discussions on the programme budget were not the appropriate forum for the review of mandates called for in the Summit Outcome. Such an approach was not technically sound and should be strongly discouraged. Any review of mandates should be carried out by the appropriate intergovernmental body and through the appropriate intergovernmental processes, including through CPC.

30. **Ms. Taylor Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that it had been made very clear during negotiations on the Summit Outcome that there should be no special activity by the Secretary-General with respect to the reviewing of mandates. There was an established procedure for such review activities and the Outcome did not negate that procedure in any way. All mandates should therefore be maintained until the General Assembly took a relevant decision. The Group of 77 and China was prepared to achieve a resolution on the budget proposals, but on a purely unconditional basis.

31. **Mr. El Naggar** (Egypt) said that his delegation fully supported the statement made by the Observer for Palestine on the proposed programme budget, as well as the statements made earlier in the meeting by Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, the Syrian Arab Republic, and South Africa. Neither the Committee nor the programme budget provided the appropriate framework for the discussion of political issues.

32. His delegation wished to reaffirm its full support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their right to self-determination, as provided for in the relevant United Nations resolutions. All United Nations resolutions should be provided for financially, on an unconditional basis, and the General Assembly alone was mandated to define and review the Organization's various programmes and mandates. ACABQ had exceeded its mandate in its report on the proposed programme budget, not only with regard to CPC but also with regard to the General Assembly. It had criticized the General Assembly in several paragraphs of the report and had reflected certain

national positions that had been previously rejected by the General Assembly.

33. His delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Sierra Leone concerning Secretariat reform. The international community's desire for reform of United Nations management was not merely a response to the findings of the report on the oil-for-food programme. With respect to CPC, his delegation appealed to the Secretariat not to reinterpret the resolutions of the General Assembly, particularly resolution 58/269 on the strengthening and monitoring of programme performance and evaluation. Objective adherence to that resolution was essential to the success of the budget-cycle reform experiment.

34. **Mr. Berti Oliva** (Cuba) said that his delegation supported the statements made by the Observer for Palestine and by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China concerning the question of Palestine. Cuba would not accept any pressure from delegations that wished their national positions to be included in the resolution on the programme budget. Neither the Secretariat nor Member States should attempt to use any scandal involving the United Nations to apply pressure with respect to the proposed reforms, which were intended as a way to improve the Organization, not as a response to a scandal.

35. Cuba wished to know why the Secretariat had prepared the report on the progress of and lessons learned from the redeployment of posts experiment, which had been requested under General Assembly resolution 58/270. Neither Member States nor the Secretariat should reinterpret agreements reached under General Assembly resolution 58/269.

36. **Mr. Sach** (Controller), responding to members' comments, said that it had not been traditional practice to quantify individual outputs in the budget proposal. Under the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME), the level of financial resources to be linked to programmes was determined at the subprogramme level. However, the Secretariat was looking into the issue in the context of cost-accounting studies requested by the Committee.

37. The Secretariat was well aware that the mandate review requested in paragraph 163 (b) of the Summit

Outcome was a request to the General Assembly and other relevant organs, and that the Secretariat's role was limited to facilitating the review through analysis and recommendations.

38. The Secretariat had not reinterpreted General Assembly resolution 58/269. It had established an interpretation during negotiation of the resolution, when it had been asked to provide mock-ups of the narratives that would be presented. Those narratives had originally consisted only of the logical frameworks, but he had then come to understand that some delegations wanted the narratives to also include the orientation paragraphs of the individual budget sections. The Secretariat did want the experiment to succeed and would be happy to work with delegations to ensure that all interpretations of the instructions in the resolution were understood by all concerned.

39. With respect to the linkage between the budget and the follow-up to the 2005 High-level Plenary Meeting, delegations might not have fully understood his intended meaning. It was the Secretariat's position that managerial reform was justified on its own merits. It had already been on the General Assembly's agenda and had merely been reiterated at the High-level Plenary Meeting. He would circulate his earlier statement to the Committee in an effort to clarify that position fully.

Financial viability of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research

40. **Mr. Moffat** (Officer-in-Charge of the Economic, Social and Human Rights Service in the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financial viability of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) (A/60/360), said that UNITAR resources remained unstable. Since 2001, the average level of voluntary contributions had met approximately half of the cost of maintaining its core training programmes for international cooperation and multilateral diplomacy. Those programmes could be maintained if UNITAR received a subvention from the regular budget to meet rental and maintenance costs. The annexes to the report contained further financial information in support of the recommendation for a subvention.

41. **Mr. Saha** (Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary

Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/60/7/Add.4), which in his view required no explanation, said that its main recommendation was that it was for the General Assembly to decide whether or not UNITAR should receive a subvention (paragraph 6).

42. **Ms. Taylor Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the role of UNITAR in the eyes of Member States had not changed since its foundation in 1963. The Institute existed to provide training for their representatives to the Organization and to conduct research aimed at promoting economic and social development.

43. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/252, had encouraged the Institute's Board of Trustees to increase participation and reduce costs by holding events in a wider variety of locations, including the regional commissions' host cities, and, in its resolution 59/276, had called on UNITAR to maintain its level of training and manage its programmes in a viable manner. Her Group was puzzled at the recommendations of the Advisory Committee regarding compliance with resolution 59/276, as UNITAR had apparently fulfilled the resolution's request regarding the level of training. The Advisory Committee should also clarify the Institute's progress in implementing the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, including those relating to the geographical distribution of UNITAR staff.

44. Rent and maintenance costs affected the Institute's ability to conduct its core training programme effectively and in accordance with its Statute. The General Assembly had considered that problem regularly since 1997. Following its request to him in resolution 52/206, the Secretary-General had concluded that the only possible source of predictable support for UNITAR was a subvention from the regular budget.

45. Although the efforts of UNITAR to improve its financial situation by fund-raising and promoting its facilities had succeeded, the temporary surplus in its accounts was caused mainly by income from the Special Purpose Grants Fund rather than voluntary contributions received. It would fall into arrears once again if there was a downturn in special projects. The Group therefore supported the recommendation of the Secretary-General that the General Assembly should consider providing an annual subvention, and believed

that the issue must not remain perennially on its agenda.

46. **Mr. Longhurst** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Croatia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; and, in addition, Liechtenstein, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the Institute's work was valuable, but having considered its financial difficulties and the failure to fulfil a number of the recommendations of the Board of Auditors, the European Union would find it difficult to consider a subvention from the regular budget. UNITAR should continue to use voluntary contributions as its main source of funding, address the matter of its arrears to the Organization, and implement all outstanding Board of Auditors recommendations. The European Union would like more information on such action before it could judge whether a subvention was genuinely needed.

47. **Ms. Shah** (United States of America) said that her delegation was pleased that UNITAR, which had played an important role for many years, had achieved its objective of increasing the balance of its General Fund to \$1 million and hoped that its Board of Trustees would continue to set fund-raising targets. It noted, however, that the Special Purpose Grants Fund had tended to receive more contributions than the General Fund. Perhaps that was a sign that donors were more interested in the Institute's specialist training than in its core training programmes.

48. The mandate of UNITAR, whose activities were funded by voluntary contributions, must be respected and her delegation was disappointed that the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/360) had proposed to the General Assembly only one method of providing long-term, sound and predictable funding of rental and maintenance costs, namely, an annual subvention from the regular budget, rather than more creative and innovative solutions. Those costs should not be funded by a subvention. Discussion should continue to find other methods.

49. **Mr. Stähli** (Switzerland) said that his country welcomed the effort to improve the balance of the UNITAR General Fund, to which it was a principal contributor, through fund-raising and more systematic

charging of the 13 per cent of programme support costs (overhead) to programme grants. The Swiss authorities had asked for the consequences of the substantial General Fund surplus to be placed on the agenda of the next meeting of the UNITAR Board of Trustees.

50. As the regular budget subvention requested had been reduced, his delegation was willing to discuss it, but the figures provided in the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/360) were not a precise enough basis for a decision and must be refined. It also wished to encourage the Executive Director of UNITAR to promptly implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee and the Board of Auditors.

51. **Mr. Kozaki** (Japan) said that his delegation's views on the need for budgetary discipline, especially in the use of assessed contributions, were well-known, and applied as much to UNITAR as to other issues.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (*continued*) (A/C.5/60/L.4)

Draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.4

52. **The Chairman** drew attention to draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.4, which had been submitted on his behalf by the representative of Ireland.

53. *Draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.4 was adopted.*

Agenda item 145: Financing of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (*continued*) (A/C.5/60/L.3)

54. **Mr. Saizonou** (Benin), Vice-Chairman, introducing draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.3, said that, as part of the agreement reached during the informal consultations on the item, he had been asked to state that, during the informal consultations, the Committee had not endorsed paragraph 22 of the report of the Advisory Committee (A/60/386). Some delegations felt that the recommendations and observations it contained were unclear and confusing. The Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee had verbally certified that the proposed reduction of \$1.1 million was intended as a technical adjustment to the overall level of operational costs and not targeted at any specific programme. Some delegations had felt that the text of the paragraph, in particular the footnote, did not correspond to the rationale given by the Acting Chairman. Other delegations were satisfied with the oral clarification provided by the Acting Chairman.

The Committee, as part of the agreement, had requested him to encourage the Advisory Committee to make every effort in future to draft its observations and recommendations in clear and concise terms. The Committee, furthermore, expressed appreciation to the Acting Chairman for attempting to clarify the intentions of the Advisory Committee.

55. He also wished to draw attention to, and to request correction of a discrepancy in the French text of the draft resolution between the title of the agenda item and the title of the draft resolution.

56. **Mr. Xudong Sun** (China) said that he wished to draw attention to a further discrepancy. While the English text of paragraph 10 of the draft resolution read "*Decides* not to endorse paragraph 22 of the report of the Advisory Committee", the equivalent Chinese text meant "endorse" rather than "not to endorse".

57. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) said that the appropriate Secretariat translation services would be informed of the textual discrepancies and the draft resolution would be corrected and reissued for technical reasons.

58. *Draft resolution A/C.5/60/L.3, as orally corrected, was adopted.*

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.



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Sixtieth session

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Summary record of the 16th meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 31 October 2005 at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Muhith (Vice-Chairman)..... (Bangladesh)
*Acting Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative
and Budgetary Questions:* Mr. Saha

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Agenda item 124: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007
(continued)

*Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/60/L.12: Holocaust
remembrance*

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In the absence of Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Mr. Muhiith (Bangladesh), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 11.10 a.m.

Agenda item 124: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (continued)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/60/L.12: Holocaust remembrance (A/60/7/Add.6 and A/60/526; A/60/L.12)

1. **Ms. Van Buerle** (Officer-in-Charge of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) introduced the Secretary-General's statement, contained in document A/60/526, on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/60/L.12, entitled "Holocaust remembrance". Under paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the Secretary General to establish a programme of outreach on the subject of the "Holocaust and the United Nations", as well as measures to mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, in order to help prevent future acts of genocide. The Secretary-General would also be requested to report to the General Assembly on the establishment of the programme within six months from the date of the adoption of the draft resolution and to report on the implementation of the programme at the Assembly's sixty-third session.

2. Parts II and III of the Secretary-General's statement outlined the relationship of the requested activities to the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007, indicating that they fell under section 27, Public information. The outreach programme would be established in the Department of Public Information, and an annual two-day seminar on the lessons of the Holocaust would be held in New York. Estimated additional resources of \$345,200 would be required under that budget section, as detailed in part IV of the statement. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/213, a contingency fund was established for each biennium to accommodate additional expenditures derived from legislative mandates not provided for in the approved or proposed programme budget. As outlined in part VI of the Secretary-General's statement, if the General Assembly adopted the draft resolution, the additional resources would represent a charge against the contingency fund.

3. **Mr. Maycock** (Advisory Committee Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the report of the Advisory Committee on programme budget implications of the draft resolution (A/60/7/Add.6), said that he wished to point out the extraordinary nature of the proceedings. Recalling the Advisory Committee had received the Secretary-General's statement only two hours previously, he noted that such a method of proceeding called into question the validity of procedures for the consideration of administrative and budgetary matters, and trusted that such a method would be avoided in the future.

4. The Secretary-General had proposed an amount of \$172.8 million under section 27 for the 2006-2007 budget. Under the current proposal, the Department of Public Information would have a total regular budget establishment of 747 posts, including 162 P-4 posts and 231 General Service posts. According to information received by the Advisory Committee, the Department would also have available to it over \$5 million in general temporary assistance, not including nearly \$1 million for overtime and personal services contracts.

5. The Advisory Committee had consistently cautioned against the Secretariat's inclination to request additional resources for each and every new activity instead of maximizing the existing potential. It believed that the envisaged activities could be carried out without the need to request additional resources. The Fifth Committee should therefore report to the General Assembly that, should it adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/60/L.12, there would be no need for an additional appropriation at the current time. Should any such requirement materialize, it could be reported in the first performance report on the programme budget for 2006-2007.

The meeting was suspended at 11.20 a.m. and resumed at 12.20 p.m.

6. **The Chairman** said it was his understanding that the Committee had reached agreement concerning programme budget implications of draft resolution A/60/L.12, and requested the Secretary to read out the text of the Committee's draft decision.

7. **Mr. Abelian** (Secretary of the Committee) read out the text of the Committee's draft decision:

"The Fifth Committee, having considered the statement of programme budget implications

submitted by the Secretary-General (A/60/526) and the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (A/60/7/Add.6), wishes to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/60/L.12, additional resources in the amount of \$345,200 would be required under section 27, Public information. This would be charged against the contingency fund and, as such, would require appropriation for the biennium 2006-2007. In this context, the Fifth Committee requests the Secretary-General to report on the actual expenditures incurred for this activity under section 27, Public information, in the context of his second performance report for the biennium 2006-2007."

8. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft decision.

9. *It was so decided.*

10. **Mr. Longhurst** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said it was important that the activities set forth in draft resolution A/60/L.12 should be properly implemented and financed. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, the European Union fully agreed with the comments of the Advisory Committee concerning the extraordinary nature of the proceedings, but had decided to support the draft decision in the interests of consensus and a speedy settlement of the issue. However, the Department of Public Information should continue to seek ways to reprioritize its activities, and the European Union would revisit the issue in the context of the Committee's discussions on section 27 of the proposed programme budget.

11. **Mr. Repasch** (United States of America) said that his delegation also fully agreed with the comments of the Advisory Committee, and supported its findings and recommendations. However, it had joined the consensus on the draft decision so that the General Assembly could take prompt action on the matter. As a co-sponsor of the draft resolution, the United States was convinced of the need to implement the requested activities, but expected that the Department of Public Information would do so as efficiently and effectively as possible. It also understood that the contingency fund would be discussed further in the context of the negotiations on the proposed budget.

12. **Ms. Taylor Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that her delegation also wished to draw attention to the comments of the Advisory Committee on the procedure whereby the issue had been brought before the Committee, and urged that every effort should be made to avoid a recurrence of the situation. However, her delegation did not agree with the Advisory Committee's comment regarding the Secretariat's inclination to request additional resources for each new activity, and was very surprised at that approach. Departments requested resources because their activities had been approved, and the Committee could not, therefore, simply state that there was enough money available.

13. **Mr. Mazumdar** (India), noting that his delegation supported the draft resolution, said that the premise that newer mandates should be financed through the displacement of earlier mandates was not acceptable, as pointed out by the representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Furthermore, the premise that the budget level of the Department for Public Information was such that it could absorb newer mandates was unacceptable. That Department's budget had been consistently pared down, and the issue should be revisited — and the Department's budget increased — within the context of the Committee's budget negotiations.

14. **Mr. Torres Lépori** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, said that his delegation fully supported the draft resolution but was concerned at the hurried manner in which the programme budget implications had been presented to the Committee. Moreover, that proceeding ran counter to the Committee's traditional practice of analysing all programme budget implications together.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.